GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5726
ANSWERED ON:16.05.2007
INDIAN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN UAE
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Human Rights Watch has conducted any study on the conditions of the Indian construction workers in U.A.E.;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of the Government in this regard; and

(d) the action taken by the Government for implementation of the suggestions and observations made in the Report?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) In November 2006, The Human Rights Watch, a US-based Non Government Organisation published a report entitled "Building Towers, Cheating Workers − Exploitation of Migrant Construction Workers in the UAE". The report was researched and written by Mr. Hadi Ghaemi, researcher in the Middle East and North Africa Division of the Human Rights Watch.

(b) Major recommendations of the report were as follows:

1. Minimum wage structure should be implemented in UAE.

2. Free trade unions and collective bargaining should be allowed in UAE.

3. The number of labour inspectors in UAE should be increased.

4. Stringent punishment should be imposed on employers and recruiting agents who flout the law.

5. International standards should be imposed for the health and safety of workers.

6. Qualitative database on labour disputes, deaths and injuries should be provided by the Government.

(c)&(d) Since the report is not India-specific and covers all expatriate workers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), it is for the UAE government to consider implementation of the recommendations made therein. On its part, the Government of India keep a close eye on the condition of Indian workers abroad and takes steps as required from time to time including through consultation with the host governments, to ensure their welfare.